

REMARKS

Claims 9-18 and 21-26 were pending in this application, of which claims 9-17, 21, 24 and 25 are allowed and claims 18, 22-23 and 26 have been rejected. Acknowledgement is made with appreciation of the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 9-17, 21, 24 and 25. By this Amendment, claim 26 has been canceled and claim 18 has been amended to further emphasize the features of the present invention. The claim amendments are fully supported by the original specification and claims. No new matter has been added. Claims 9-18 and 21-25 will remain pending in this application. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejection(s) in view of the remarks contained herein.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 18, 22-23 and 26 were rejected under 35 U. S. C. § 102(b) as allegedly anticipated by Thompson (US 5,022,419). By this Amendment, claim 26 has been canceled and claim 18 has been amended to clarify patentable features. Thus, the rejection to claim 26 is moot. The outstanding rejection to claims 18 and 22-23 is traversed because Thompson fails to inherently or explicitly disclose each and every feature of the invention as set forth in amended claim 18.

As amended claim 18 recites the following features:

“a processing container for accommodating the circular plates and the wafer holding members therein, the processing container formed in a cylindrical shape and having a circumferential inner surface facing the peripheral parts of the wafers and a side inner surface facing the pair of circular plates; and

a nozzle arranged on the circumferential inner surface of the processing container for supplying the wafers with a processing liquid thereby to carry out a liquid process; and

an ejecting orifice formed on the side inner surface of the processing container, the ejecting orifice being formed so that the ejecting orifice ejects a processing fluid towards a surface of the circular plate facing the side inner surface of the processing container so as to clean the surface of the circular plate”.

Thompson fails to teach or suggest these features, and the resulting benefits.

With the configuration of amended claim 18, while the wafers are processed by the processing liquid supplied from the nozzle arranged on the circumferential inner surface of the cylindrical processing container, it also is possible to clean the surface of the circular plates facing the side inner surface of the cylindrical container with the ejecting orifice formed on the side inner surface of the processing container. Thompson fails to teach or suggest the claimed configuration with a nozzle arranged on the circumferential inner surface of the processing container and an ejecting orifice formed on the side inner surface of the processing container.

According to Applicants, Thompson discloses, to those of ordinary skill in the art, nozzles 28/30 positioned on the circumferential inner surface on the cylindrical container 12. However, Thompson fails to disclose ejecting orifices formed on the side inner surfaces of the cylindrical container 12 that face circular plates 122/126. Therefore, with the apparatus of Thompson it is impossible to clean the surface of the circular plates 122/126 while the wafers are processed by the processing liquid supplied from nozzles 28/30. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that Thompson fails to teach or suggest ejecting orifices on the side inner surface of the processing container, which orifices eject processing fluid towards the surface of a circular plate that faces the side inner surface of the processing container (so as to clean the surface of the circular plate). Hence, Applicants respectfully further submit that the purpose, function and effect of the claimed invention is patentably distinguishable from that of Thompson.

Thus, for at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that amended claim 18 and its dependent claims 22-23 are not anticipated under 35 U.S.C. §102 and rather are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that the above remarks obviate the outstanding rejection(s) in this case, thereby placing the application in condition for immediate allowance. Allowance of this application is earnestly solicited.

If any fees under 37 C. F. R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17 are due in connection with this filing, please charge the fees to Deposit Account No. 02-4300, Order No. 033082M072.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: December 3, 2004